

II. An Effective Program

- A systematic approach to change
- Guidelines for an effective foreign language program
- Program models
- Which languages should be offered?

Good planning, cooperation, and commitment are the keys to an effective foreign language program. Continuous, standards-driven foreign language instruction for every student in South Carolina requires ongoing coordination at every level of the State's educational system.

All educators, administrators, school boards, and communities must work together to enhance and expand an articulated foreign language program in South Carolina schools. Restructuring the foreign language program enables teachers to help students become proficient in foreign languages. A long-term commitment to foreign language education leads to success.

A systematic approach to change

Continuous, standards-driven foreign language education for every student has a number of implications. Qualified foreign language teachers must be recruited in greater numbers to handle increased enrollments. Teacher preparation programs in the State's colleges and universities must emphasize the goals and standards to equip future teachers with a variety of teaching methods appropriate for the increasing diversity of age levels and learning styles in foreign language classrooms.

Teacher certification requirements must reflect this emphasis on a standards-driven program. Professional development opportunities must be provided so current teachers can keep up-to-date with methodology in their field and maintain their own personal language skills. Local school districts, the State Department of Education, and colleges and universities must work together to provide quality programs.

"Ideally, the responsibility for curriculum development and implementation is shared equally by the classroom teacher and the school and/or district administrators. Each learning activity in the teacher's daily lesson plan should lead toward achievement of the

Expanded foreign language education will affect

- teacher preparation programs and certification requirements;
- teacher recruitment practices;
- professional development programs;
- instructional materials criteria;
- elementary, middle school, and high school curricula, and
- educational policy.

goals at the local level. In developing or evaluating the local curriculum, the program goals of the curriculum should align with local goals, the state framework or standards, and the national standards documents." (*Bringing the Standards into the Classroom*, 6).

When correlating classroom goals with the standards, educators need to consider the following: instructional materials, curriculum previously developed or adapted, supplementary materials, available technology, student profiles, community resources, and colleagues as resources (*Bringing the Standards into the Classroom*, 9).

Criteria for selecting instructional materials must reflect the need for nontraditional materials in standards-driven classrooms. Extracurricular foreign language opportunities must be provided to reinforce what students learn in the classroom so that they can acquire the necessary level of proficiency. Special attention must be paid to the development of foreign language programs in elementary and middle schools, with educators making sure that these programs are sequenced so that a smooth progression of skills from one learning level to another exists.

If the curriculum at the local level is being developed or evaluated, the following information relevant to the individual school or school district also should be considered: the mission statement or philosophy of the school or district; the goals of the school board; the goals of the foreign language program; the expectations of students, parents, and the community; and the profile of the student body (*Bringing the Standards into the Classroom*, 8).

To encourage the development of foreign language proficiency among South Carolina students and to facilitate the development of quality programs throughout the State, this framework establishes guidelines for effective foreign language instruction. These guidelines are to be used by school districts in designing and evaluating foreign language programs, by the State in structuring educational support systems and setting educational policy in areas such as accreditation and accountability, and by colleges and universities in revising teacher preparation programs.

Guidelines for an effective foreign language program

In an effective foreign language program, the following conditions exist:

Ways business and industry can help foreign language programs

- send representatives from their companies to local schools to talk to students about the need for employees with foreign language skills;
- provide samples of business materials written in foreign languages for teachers to use in the classroom;
- sponsor in-service study abroad for teachers to enhance their own language proficiency and cultural awareness;
- provide funding for special foreign language events, such as an international career day at a local school;
- sponsor work-study and exchange programs for foreign language students; and
- assist in curriculum development.

- Every student is given the opportunity to study at least one foreign language.
- The study of a foreign language begins early in the child's life—ideally in kindergarten but no later than age ten—and study continues uninterrupted through high school.
- Instruction is standards-driven. It supports the goals of foreign language learning: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.
- Foreign language instruction is a permanent, core component of the school curriculum.
- Teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other interested community members work together in establishing the foreign language program, with special effort made to include local business and industry in the process.
- Instruction in foreign languages emphasizes the higher-order thinking skills inherent in the learning of language, such as reasoning, problem solving, and evaluation.
- Foreign languages adapt easily to an interdisciplinary approach; instruction is coordinated with lessons in other subjects.
- Students receive frequent foreign language instruction in classes small enough to facilitate communication:
 - Instruction in kindergarten through the eighth grade includes a minimum of seventy-five minutes per week, broken down into at least three sessions.
 - Instruction in grades nine through twelve meets the accreditation standards set by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- Students are exposed to a language's native speakers and their cultures, with affirmation given to multiethnic diversity.
- The curriculum is sequential and articulated; that is, study of a foreign language is continuous, with a smooth and logical progression of skills from one school year to the next.
- Ongoing communication and cooperation exist among teachers and administrators at every school level, from elementary to college, to ensure successful progression.
- Guidelines for expected proficiency at specific levels of learning are established, and effective methods for assessing individual programs and student progress are developed.

Cultural diversity

French is not just the language of France. French is also spoken in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, French Guyana, French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Luxembourg, Martinique, New Caledonia, Saint-Pierre, and Miquelon, and in twenty-two African countries, such as Tunisia, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Morocco, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

An interdisciplinary approach

"The perennial question asked by administrators and classroom teachers is: 'What will we have to take out of the curriculum in order to include foreign language instruction? There is currently not enough time in the curriculum for us to accomplish our existing goals.' A foreign language curriculum that introduces or reinforces some mathematics, social studies, and science concepts, and that incorporates study skills and thinking skills, provides a powerful rationale for justifying a stable place in the curriculum for elementary foreign language instruction."

Curtain and Pesola, *Languages and Children, Making the Match: Foreign Language Instruction in the Elementary School*, 97.

- Instruction is provided by foreign language professionals who are proficient in their languages and familiar with a variety of foreign language teaching methods and strategies. Foreign language teachers are provided with ongoing professional development opportunities to maintain and improve their proficiency.
- Multimedia and computer technology are available, with centralized resource centers and computer networks. Foreign language teachers and school media specialists work together to establish quality collections of foreign language resources.
- The State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school districts, and local businesses and communities work together to develop and fund recommended programs, activities, materials, equipment, and technology.

Program models

While language proficiency is a primary goal of foreign language programs, no one common method of instruction accomplishes that goal. Several program models exist to provide a basis for designing foreign language instruction. These models include, but are not limited to, the following approaches:

Interdisciplinary. A program that involves foreign language instruction across the curriculum with an emphasis on meaningful context and real-world applications. Language is presented as a means for learning about the world, not as an isolated subject in and of itself; it introduces or reinforces concepts such as mathematics, social studies, and science.

Total Immersion. A program in which students spend most of the school day studying content areas (math, science, social studies, and so forth) in a foreign language. Instruction in the foreign language itself is incorporated into the curriculum as needed.

Partial Immersion. A program similar to total immersion, with half of each school day spent on the study of content areas in the foreign language.

Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES). Ongoing foreign language instruction in the elementary grades by a language specialist trained in the learning styles and the needs of young learners. Emphasis is placed on communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. FLES is part of an extended sequence of language study leading to continued study in the secondary grades. Working in twenty- to sixty-minute class periods, three to five days a week, students must receive at least seventy-five minutes of instruction per week.

Content-Enriched. A program with less than half of the school day spent in the study of content areas in the foreign language.

International Baccalaureate. A rigorous international K–12 curriculum—including primary and secondary languages, social studies, mathematics, and sciences—designed to prepare students for worldwide university study.

Advanced Placement. A high school program providing advanced study in the core subjects including foreign languages. Through successful completion of the AP exam, students may earn college-level credit in that subject.

Which languages should be offered?

The guidelines for an effective foreign language program do not specify which foreign languages should be offered. Administrators, community leaders, parents, students, and teachers in each school district need to determine that for themselves.

Careful study should precede decisions about which foreign languages need to be taught in any given community. Factors for consideration include students' future educational and vocational needs, the cultural makeup of the community, the significance of international and local business investments, and the availability of qualified instructors.

The foreign languages traditionally taught in South Carolina's schools are French, German, Latin, and Spanish. Latin, which usually focuses on the written word, fosters a more analytical approach to grammatical structures and complements other foreign languages. Large populations in countries throughout the world, many of which are important trading partners of the United States, speak the three modern foreign languages. The study of French and German is important in South Carolina since France and Germany are our primary foreign investors. Because of the large Hispanic population in the State, the study of Spanish has grown in significance.

Other languages, in addition to the traditional four, have gained significance in the State. Japan, a growing economic force in the South Carolina's economy, has fostered a demand for Japanese as a modern language. Russian is also making inroads into foreign language curricula in South Carolina.

Still other languages address special interests within individual school districts. These might include African languages such as Arabic and Swahili; Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese; eastern and southern European languages such as Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and modern Greek; and Native American languages. School districts considering offering these languages should be aware that the study of these languages might not satisfy all colleges' entrance requirements. Availability of instructors and the school's ability to maintain a sequential program must also be considered.

Factors for educators to consider when choosing foreign languages for their curriculum

- students' future educational and vocational needs,
- the cultural makeup of the community,
- international and local business investments, and
- the availability of qualified instructors.

Curriculum development

"Participating in the process of curriculum development or evaluation can be an empowering experience. It is a process that, if shared among classroom teachers across levels in the school or district, is likely to enhance the sequence of instruction from level to level, in addition to improving the overall instruction."

Bringing the Standards into the Classroom, 13.

“Our children deserve a quality education, including the right to study foreign languages, as the majority of their peers around the world now do—even those in developing nations” (*Bringing the Standards into the Classroom*, 13).

Establishment and implementation of effective foreign language programs is essential to quality education. New vistas open before South Carolina students as they experience the language and cultures of other countries. One significant part of their education, the study of foreign languages, must begin in a sequential program that continues through graduation and possibly beyond. Communication in another language enables students to experience connections with other disciplines as well as to make comparisons among other communities and cultures. Language study prepares students for a global economy and the world community. South Carolina students must be ready to step into appropriate positions with proficiency and facility in foreign languages.